

Part I: "Some Account of the Achievements of the Celebrated Virginian Hero, George Rogers Clark, in the Western Country," March 30, 1816

Some account of the achievements of the celebrated Virginian hero, George Rogers Clarke, in the Western Country.

The year 1778 constitutes a remarkable epoch in the revolutionary annals of confederated America. In that memorable year, the savage Foresters, who inhabited the vicinity of the American settlements, could not be induced to remain inactive spectators of the contest between Great Britain and the States that had lately shaken off their dependence upon her. Early accustomed to rapine, exulting in destruction and blood, they wanted no more than their inculcated ferocity and their hereditary resentments against the Whites in general to hurry them into hostilities. But to these inherent principles of rancor, and of that fondness for war, were added the corrupting liberality and insidious promises of British Emissaries, who seeking a refuge among them, endeavored to infuse into their hearts the malignant and vindictive passions which raged in their own bosoms. The north western frontier suffered extremely from their ruthless incursions. - Like beasts of prey, they unexpectedly fell upon their intended victims; and after glutting with blood, their ferocious appetites, and inflicting all the misery in their power, they most frequently retired, unpursued and unpunished, to their wild and remote {fashesses}

In this fearful crisis, it was fortunate for Virginia to possess, on her western borders, one of those rare individuals whom nature has endowed with equal energy of body and mind - with genius to plan, and activity to execute. Col. George Rogers Clarke saved her back settlements from Indian fury. He did more. He planted her standard far beyond the banks of the Ohio- and added profitable conquests to the glory of chastising a cruel and insolent foe, and of ensuring tranquility to a whole frontier.

Previous apprehensions and judicious views had induced the Legislature to place under his command a portion of the public force. - It was well known that the Governor of the settlements planted by the Canadians on the Upper Mississippi, in the Illinois Country was an indefatigable agent of British ambition and British cruelty- paying largely for the scalps of Americans - and, by every possible method, stimulating the neighboring Indians to annoy and ravage the frontier. To strike an unexpected and decisive blow at this mischievous enemy, had long been a favourite scheme with Col Clarke - The petty warfare which he had hitherto waged, satisfied neither his patriotism (sic), nor his commendable love of fame. Even on the present occasion, he could obtain a small force only - between 2 & 300 men But, like himself, these few patriots were inured to fatigue, regardless of danger, and panting after their country's applause. No difficulty could damp their ardor Descending the Monongahela, and the Ohio, down the great falls of the latter - they there hid their boats - and shaped their course northwardly Their provisions, which they carried on their backs, were soon consumed- for two days, they subsisted on roots, and, in a

state of famine, reached the town of Kaskaskias, on the banks of the Mississippi. Hitherto fortune had smiled on their enterprize - no detachment of savage warriors, no straggling forester, had discovered their approach- This success heightened their hopes, stimulated their courage The town and Fort might have resisted a much larger band of assailants- but Clarke and his adventurous companions advanced into Kaskaskias unseen and unheard - The midnight hour favoured their design. They found the inhabitants reposing in the lap of that security, which the idea of vast distances from the American settlements was calculated to create.- The town and the forts were taken in silence and without opposition. The surprise was so judiciously conducted, and so completely effected, that not a single person escaped to spread the alarm through the neighbouring settlements. Clarke, seizing the golden moment, immediately mounted a detachment of his men on horses found at Kaskaskias, and three other towns, further up the Mississippi, were reduced with equal success. - Rochablave, the obnoxious Governor, was sent to Virginia, with the written instructions which had been forwarded to him from Quebec, Detroit, and Michillimackinack, for exciting the Indians, and paying to them the price of blood. The settlers readily transferred their allegiance, and, as this territory belonged to Virginia by charter and conquest, the General Assembly, at their autumnal session, created it into a distinct county, to be called the county of Illinois - A temporary form of government was adapted to the circumstances of the people. - To the Governor of the Commonwealth, the appointment (sic) of a county lieutenant, & through him, of all military agents, to act during pleasure, was attributed. The choice and support of the usual civil officers were left to the inhabitants. The treasury of the State was to defray extraordinary expenses. In criminal cases, the County Lieutenant might grant a pardon, except in condemnations for murder and treason, when he could only suspend execution until the sense of the Governor in the first instance, and that of the General Assembly, in the second should be obtained To supply the wants of the inhabitants and of the friendly Indians in the neighborhood, a trade, on public account, was opened with New Orleans, and other places, but without precluding private commercial enterprize, the eventual deficiencies of which the public trade was only intended to cover. - This new port, if properly protected and maintained, evidently promised to check the inroads and depredations of the Indians on the Inhabitants of the western frontier of Virginia. Levies of infantry and cavalry were, therefore, directed to be speedily made, and to reinforce the brave and triumphant bandful of patriots who had effected this important reduction, and whose services were so justly rewarded with the applause of their grateful country. The [illegible] incident to military preparations whose object was not immediately felt by the mass of the people, and lay at an immense distance from the seat of government, which, like the heart in the human body, often glows with a vivifying heat, while the extremities are cold and languid, prevented Col Clarke from receiving, in its full extent, the conemplated (sic) aid. His genius and activity supplied this deficiency. They doubled his physical force. Insulated, as it were, in the heart of the indian country - in the neighbourhood of the most warlike and ferocious tribes - in the track of many others, in the way of all, he knew how to maintain the power of his country, in this new acquisition - not only averting insult and injury- but carrying terror into the strongest holds, and the most solitary recesses of those Indians, who, from time to time, sallied forth, like tygers, in quest of carnage - and effectually repressing all hostile attempts.

(To be Continued)

In the House of Delegates, Nov. 23, 1778

"Whereas authentic Information has been received that Lieut. Col. George Rogers Clarke with a body of Virginia, Militia, has reduced the British posts in the Western part of this commonwealth, on the river Mississippi, and its branches whereby great advantages may accrue to the common cause of America, as well as this commonwealth in particular."

Resolved that the thanks of this house are justly due to the said col. Clarke, and the brave officers and men under his command, for their extraordinary resolution and preseverance (sic) in so hazardous an enterprise, and for the important services, which they have thereby rendered their country."